

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 51-54 and 56-89, with claims 90-100 having previously been withdrawn by the Examiner from consideration as directed to a non-elected invention. Claim 51 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 55. Accordingly, claim 55 has been canceled. In addition, claim 59 has been amended to correct a clerical error noted therein. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

Claims 51-58, 60-63, 65, 67-68, 70-79, 80-84 and 87-89 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Kensrue U.S. Patent No. 4,954,690*. The remaining claims under consideration by the Examiner were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kensrue* in view of *Fox U.S. Patent No. 4,937,417* (claims 59 and 64), *Hudson et al. U.S. Patent No. 2,808,498* (claim 66), *Huisman et al. U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0016788* (claims 69 and 86), or what the Examiner calls Applicant Admitted Prior Art at page 16, line 8 of the specification (claim 85).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in claim 51 as amended, Applicants' invention provides a welding torch including a torch housing, a drive unit arranged in the torch housing for feeding a welding wire, and bearings provided on the torch housing to stabilize and position a rotor of the drive motor of the drive unit. The drive motor includes a stator winding directly installed in the torch housing, and a part of the torch housing is designed as a stator housing of the drive motor of the drive unit.

By designing a part of the torch housing as a component of the drive unit, wherein a bearing for mounting the rotor is fastened to the torch housing to stabilize and position the rotor, manufacturing tolerances between the position of the motor shaft and the welding wire feed access are reduced due to the bearing site being located directly on the torch housing or base body. Due to the bearing being installed in the torch housing, the distance between the bearing and the drive roller can be reduced so as to reduce the bending moment on the motor shaft and increase the service life of the motor shaft. Optical cooling is provided for the motor parts of the drive motor because the

welding torch or torch housing can now be used as cooling surfaces, thus substantially increasing service life. The heat formed by the drive motor no longer has to be transmitted from a stator housing to a cooling surface. Rather, the formed heat is immediately introduced directly into the torch housing. Hence, there are no more transition surfaces on which heat can build up which may lead to an overheating of the drive motor. See Applicants' disclosure at page 2, second and third full paragraphs.

As discussed in Applicants' Response filed January 19, 2010, it is respectfully submitted that *Kensrue* clearly differs from Applicants' welding torch as recited in claim 51 as amended. *Kensrue* describes a welding torch with a drive motor 16 being arranged inside of the torch housing 20. A part of the torch housing 20 is not designed as a stator housing of the drive motor of the drive unit in *Kensrue's* arrangement. It is respectfully submitted that FIG. 5 of *Kensrue* clearly shows that the complete motor unit 16 together with an integrated transmission (inside the cylindrical part of the motor unit 16 having a larger diameter than the remaining part of the motor unit 16) is present and will be arranged within the casing 20 of the welding torch.

As discussed at column 5, line 17 ff of *Kensrue*, the casing 20 fits snugly around the motor 16. Between the motor 16 and the wall of the casing 20, cables 70 are placed (see FIG. 6 of *Kensrue*). Bearings for the drive shaft 56 of the motor 16 are inside the casing of motor 16 and are not provided on the torch housing to stabilize and position the rotor of the drive motor, as recited in Applicants' claim 51 as amended.

If the welding torch as recited in Applicants' claim 51 as amended were to be disassembled like the welding torch in FIG. 5 of *Kensrue*, the drive motor would necessarily be disassembled too, because the drive motor represents a part of the torch housing 28, as can be seen from FIGS. 5 to 11 of Applicants' disclosure. If the welding torch according to *Kensrue* were to be disassembled, the drive motor 16 can be removed as one single part and disassembling of the motor is unnecessary. The construction according to *Kensrue* shows an independent motor 16 arranged within the casing 20 of the welding torch 10. Consequently, between the motor 16 and the casing 20 an isolating airgap would prevent or impede the dissipation of heat from the motor 16.

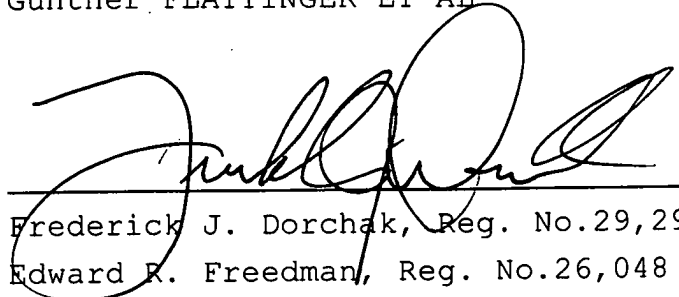
Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that *Kensrue* fails to anticipate or render obvious Applicants' welding torch as recited in claim 51 as amended.

The remaining references cited by the Examiner against certain dependent claims, including what the Examiner calls Applicant Admitted Prior Art, have been considered but are believed to be no more relevant. None of these references or what has been purportedly admitted discloses or suggests a welding torch having the structure recited in Applicants' claim 51 as amended, wherein part of the torch housing represents the stator housing of the drive motor and bearings are provided on the torch housing to stabilize and position a rotor of the drive motor and wherein the drive motor includes a stator winding directly installed in the torch housing.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 51 as amended, together with claims 52-54 and 56-89 which depend directly or indirectly thereon, are patentable over the cited references.

In summary, claims 51 and 59 have been amended and claim 55 has been canceled. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,
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